

# NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



## AS I SEE IT

### **Student Performance Improves and Graduation Rates Increase in 2009-10**

*August 9, 2010*

For the past 14 years, the state has used the ABCs of Public Education accountability program to report on public school performance. On August 5, the State Board of Education received the 2009-10 ABCs/AYP accountability report (available at <http://abcs.ncpublicschools.org/abcs>) and the news is very good.

Thanks to the hard work of local education leaders, teachers and students, more than 40 percent of the state's public schools earned one of three top designations as Honor Schools of Excellence, Schools of Excellence or Schools of Distinction. Schools in these categories have 80 percent or more of students performing at or above grade level on state end-of-grade and end-of-course tests and show student academic growth at the expected level or greater. A special congratulations goes to our 200 Honor Schools of Excellence for also meeting all federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets. This is no small achievement.

Growth is a particularly important component of the ABCs as it incorporates students' academic performance over time. The fact that 88 percent of schools met or exceeded growth goals (up from 81 percent last year) is another encouraging sign of progress. In fact, more than half of the schools showed High Growth for students, which is a substantial increase from 39.5 percent that showed high growth last year.

Efforts to make sure more students stay in school and graduate are also working. Both the four-year cohort and the five-year cohort graduation rates are up again this year, from 71.8 to 74.2 percent and 73 to 74.7 percent, respectively.

I am proud of our schools and the work being done in our classrooms today to prepare every student for college and a career. I hope you will join me in celebrating these significant achievements, especially when so many districts and schools were limited by tight budgets. As long as we continue to work together and put children first, I am confident that North Carolina schools, teachers and students will have even more to celebrate in the future.

Bill Harrison, Chairman  
State Board of Education